

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully requested.

In response to the office Action mailed September 9, 2003, which was made Final, applicants on January 9, 2004 mailed an Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 (After Final) along with a Notice of Appeal. The Notice of Appeal and Amendment were received by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on January 12, 2004.

An Advisory Action was mailed by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on January 23, 2004. The Advisory Action states that the proposed amendments will not be entered because they raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search.

Accompanying this Supplemental Amendment is an RCE that requests entry of the Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 filed January 9, 2004. The present Supplemental Amendment is intended to supplement the Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 filed January 9, 2004.

The present Supplemental Amendment adds new claims 41 through 50. New claims 41-50 are supported by the original application as filed and do not add new matter.

Applicants respectfully submit the new claim 41 is patentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,959,972 of Hamami ("Hamami") and U.S. Patent No. 5,838,924 of Anderson et al. ("Anderson"). Applicants respectfully submit that Hamami and Anderson, taken alone or in combination, do not disclose (1) a loop-back path connecting first and second nodes, wherein the first node has primary and secondary connections, and (2) a secondary connection not using network bandwidth during the normal mode.

Furthermore, applicants respectfully submit that Hamami and Anderson do not teach or suggest a combination with each other. It would be impermissible hindsight, based on applicants' own application, to combine Hamami and Anderson.

Given that new claims 42-50 depend directly or indirectly from new claim 41, and add additional limitations, applicants respectfully submit that new claims 42-50 are also patentable over Hamami and Anderson.

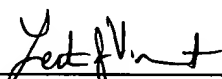
Applicants therefore respectfully submit that in view of the present Supplemental Amendment and the Amendment Under 37. C.F.R. § 1.116 filed January 9, 2004, the applicable rejections and objections have been overcome.

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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